

A4

(19)



Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11)

EP 1 008 366 A1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
14.06.2000 Bulletin 2000/24

(51) Int Cl. 7: A61N 1/32

(21) Application number: 99309853.2

(22) Date of filing: 07.12.1999

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE

Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

(30) Priority: 07.12.1998 KR 5339698

(71) Applicant: Hwang, Myun-Bae
Puk-gu, Kwangju (KR)

(72) Inventor: Hwang, Hyun-Bae
Puk-gu, Kwangju (KR)

(74) Representative:
Tunstall, Christopher Stephen et al
Dibb Lupton Alsop,
Fountain Precinct
Balm Green, Sheffield S1 1RZ (GB)

(54) Portable skin beautifying apparatus

(57) A portable skin beautifying apparatus is described that is able to perform a skin measurement operation and a plurality of skin beautifying operations. The apparatus has means for outputting galvanic current, infrared radiation, and mechanical vibration to the skin. A keypad is provided for the user to make the appropriate selections. If there is no user input, the skin measurement operation is performed using galvanic current. If there is a user input, the device determined from it one of a predetermined series of skin beautifying operations and begins performing the series from that point. Typically, the series will be a cleansing operation, a massage operation, a nutrition supply operation and a lifting operation. Each of the operations is related to a program controlling the current, infrared radiation, and mechanical vibration.

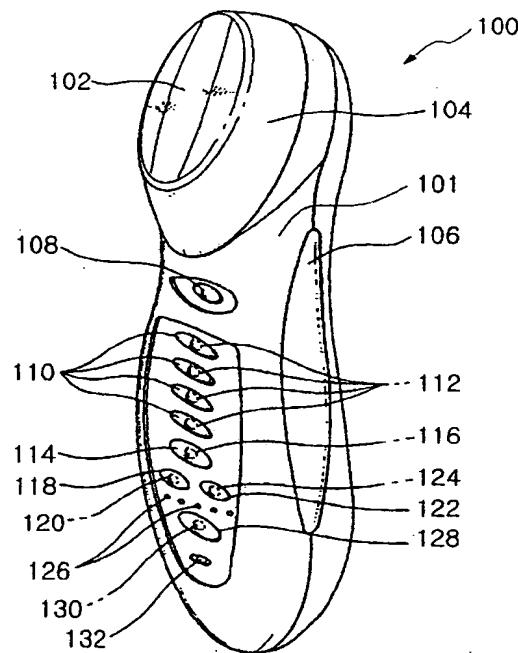


FIG. 1

Description**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0001] Generally, cosmetic substances have been used to maintain the appearance of youth by protecting the skin of a person's face from external environmental factors, preventing it from losing its resilience.

[0002] A thick proteinaceous layer of the skin lies below the corneous outer layer of the skin to protect the skin from the external environment. The outer skin layer is separated from the dermal layer by the thick proteinaceous protective layer. Therefore, even though a cosmetic substance containing bio-material may be used, that has excellent skin protective properties, it does not remove waste products that have accumulated in the dermal layer. Moreover, since alimentation components contained in cosmetic substances do not penetrate to the dermal layer, their protective effect is insufficient.

[0003] Recently, skin beautifying apparatus for beautifying the skin by galvanic ion current, far-infrared light or vibration have been introduced. Galvanic ion current maintains current direction and intensity and therefore, despite the elapse of time, galvanic ion current is very effective in chemically stimulating the skin, enhancing the skin temperature and accelerating blood circulation. This galvanic ion current is accompanied by the generation of magnetic force lines and heat. Far-infrared light having a frequency of 660 UMHz to 940 UMHz, where the absorption into the body is highest, helps prevent the skin from ageing and accelerates blood circulation. Vibration stimulates neurons and helps treat muscle fatigue.

[0004] Conventional portable beautifying apparatus use galvanic ion current, far-infrared light or vibration. In addition, if galvanic ion current is generated using battery power, the intensity and frequency of the galvanic ion current are very low, resulting in low skin stimulus.

[0005] Conventional beautifying apparatus using galvanic ion current perform a cleansing step, a massage step, a nutrition supplying step and a lifting step in that order. In the cleansing step, a continuous positive galvanic ion current is output; in the nutrition supplying step a continuous negative galvanic ion current is output; in the massage and lifting steps a continuous positive galvanic ion current is output and then a continuous negative galvanic ion current is output, these two stages being repeated. Such a conventional beautifying apparatus suffers from the drawback that the skin stimulus effect is weak.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to improve the skin beautifying effect of the device. It is another object to provide a portable beautifying apparatus with which the user can easily check skin condition.

[0007] Accordingly, there is provided a portable skin beautifying apparatus adapted to perform a skin measurement operation and a plurality of skin beautifying operations, comprising control means adapted to select,

5 in dependence upon the presence, absence or nature of a user input, the skin measurement operation or a skin beautifying operation and to cause the apparatus to perform the selected operation.

10 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] The present invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

15 FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing the appearance of the portable beautifying apparatus;
 FIG. 2 is a circuit diagram of the control device used in the apparatus of FIG. 1;
 FIG. 3 is a flow chart of a main routine for controlling the apparatus of FIG. 1;
 FIG. 4 is a flow chart of the key signal input routine in the flow chart of FIG. 3;
 FIG. 5 is a flow chart of the beautifying step selecting routine in FIG. 4;
 FIG. 6 is a flow chart of the skin measuring routines of FIGS. 3 and 4;
 FIG. 7 is a flow chart of the skin beautifying routine of FIG. 3;
 FIG. 8 is a flow chart of the cleansing routine of FIG. 7;
 FIG. 9 is a flow chart of the massage routine of FIG. 7;
 FIG. 10 is a flow chart of the nutrition supplying routine of FIG. 7;
 FIG. 11 is a flow chart of the lifting routine of FIG. 7; and
 FIG. 12a to FIG. 12d show the galvanic ion current waveforms of the various beautifying steps.

40 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0009] FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing the appearance of a portable beautifying apparatus 100. Reference numeral 101 designates the main body of the portable beautifying apparatus. A facial skin contact device 102 is positioned towards the top of the front of the main body 100. The facial skin contact device 102 is coupled to a far-infrared output device 104 in which multiple far-infrared light lamps UD1, UD2, and UD3 are provided. At both sides of left and right sides of the main body 100, there is disposed a pair of grounding devices 106 contacting with the palm of the hand while using the apparatus 100.

[0010] Reference numeral 108 represents a power key used for turning the apparatus on or off. Below the power key 108, there are multiple display windows 110 which display the present beautifying operation, i.e., the

cleansing step, massage step, nutrition supply step or lifting step, of the beautifying apparatus. Inside the display window 110, there are multiple light emitting diodes 112 that indicate the cleansing step, the massage step, the nutrition step and the lifting step. Below the display windows 110, there is an operation selection key 114, which allows the present operation to be selected by multiple depressions of the key 114. The operation selection key 114 is provided with an LED 116.

[0011] To control the intensity of the selected operation mode as "strong" or "weak", there are a pair of mode intensity control keys 118 and 122 below the operation selection key 114. The weak intensity key 118 is used to select weak intensity while the strong intensity key 122 is used to select strong intensity. Each of the weak and strong intensity keys 118 and 122 has an LED 120, 124.

[0012] Below the intensity control keys 118 and 122, there are disposed LEDs 126 representing measured skin condition. Below the multiple LEDs 126, there is a skin measuring key 126. The skin measuring key 126 is also provided with an LED 130, used to indicate operation of the skin measuring key 126. Below the skin measuring key 126, there is an LED 132 displaying the charge state of a battery contained in the body 100.

[0013] FIG. 2 is a circuit diagram of the control device used in the beautifying apparatus of FIG. 1. Reference numeral 200 designates a microcomputer that controls the operation of the beautifying apparatus and reference numeral 210 designates a display device for displaying the present operation by selectively turning on or off the LEDs 112, 116, 120, 124, 126, 130, and 132 under the control of the microcomputer 200. Reference numeral 220 designates a key input device, by which commands generated by depressing the power key 108, the operation selection key 114, the weak intensity key 118 or the strong intensity key 122, are input to the microcomputer 200.

[0014] Reference numeral 230 designates a reset key for resetting the microcomputer 200 for a time when electric power B+ is first supplied. Reference numeral 240 designates an alarm/melody generating device for generating an alarm or a melody under the control of the microcomputer 200. Reference numeral 250 designates a battery charge detecting device for detecting the charge level of the battery and provide that information to the microcomputer 200.

[0015] Reference numeral 260 designates a galvanic ion current output device controlled by the microcomputer 200. The galvanic ion current output device 260 includes a DC/DC converting device 262 for raising the battery voltage to a selected level. A power level control device controls the output level of the DC/DC converting device 262 and a galvanic ion current polarity switching device 266 switches the polarity of the galvanic ion current output to the facial skin contact device 102 from the DC/DC converting device 262. The DC/DC converting device 262 includes a DC-DC converting chip 260A, for

example serial number NJM2360 of New Japan Radio Co Ltd.

[0016] A switching limit/ground terminal SL/GND of the DC-DC converting chip 260A is grounded and a timing capacitor terminal TC is connected to a condenser C3. The power B+ is connected to a ground condenser C1 and a ground terminal Vcc of the DC-DC converting 260A. The power B+ is also connected to a sensing terminal SE of the chip 260A through a resistor R1, to an output driving terminal DC through the resistor R1 and a coil L, and to a ground condenser C5 through the resistor R1, the coil L and a diode D. Between the diode D and the ground condenser C5, resistors R5, R7, and R9 are connected in series. The connection node between the resistors R5 and R7 is connected to a voltage comparator inverting input terminal IN. The output current flowing through the diode D is applied to the facial skin contact device 102 through a resistor R11 and to the grounding device 106 through a resistor R13. Here, the resistors R11 and R13 are connected in parallel.

[0017] The power level control device 264 includes a transistor Q1 comprising emitter, base, and collector and a resistor R15 connected to the base of the transistor Q1. The base of the transistor Q1 is connected to the output terminal OUT1 of the microcomputer 220 through the resistor R15, the collector of the transistor Q1 is connected between the resistors R7 and R9 of the galvanic ion current output device 260. As the transistor Q1 turns on or off, an input voltage of the voltage comparator inverting input terminal IN of the DC-DC converting chip 260A varies, whereby an output voltage of the switching collector terminal CS of the chip 260A is produced.

[0018] The galvanic ion current polarity switching device 266 includes transistors Q3 and Q5 with bases respectively connected to the output terminals OUT2 and OUT3 through respective resistors R17 and R19. The collector of the transistor Q3 is connected between the resistor R11 and the facial skin contact device 102 and the collector of the transistor Q5 is connected between the resistor R13 and the grounding device 106. As the transistors Q3 and Q5 turn on or off, positive or negative galvanic ion current is output to the facial skin contact device 102.

[0019] Reference numeral 270 designates a galvanic ion current detecting device which detects the galvanic ion current through the facial skin contact device 102 and the grounding device 106. The galvanic ion current detecting device 270 includes a photo-coupler 272 connected between the resistor R13 and the grounding device 106. The photo-coupler 272 comprises a pair of LEDs arranged in parallel with a polarity direction different from each other and a light receiving transistor. The light receiving transistor includes a collector which is directly connected to the electric power B+ and an emitter which is connected to the electric power B+ through a resistor R21. The galvanic ion current detecting device 270 further includes first and second amplifiers 274 and

276. An output of the emitter of the light receiving device is input into the first arithmetic amplifier 274 acting as a buffer through a ground resistor 23, a ground condenser C7 and a resistor 25. An output of the first amplifier 274 is input into the positive terminal of the second amplifier 276 through a resistor R27. The negative terminal of the second amplifier 276 is connected to the output terminal of the second amplifier 276 through a resistor R29 and is grounded through a resistor R31. The output terminal of the second amplifier 276 is connected to the input terminal CIN of the microcomputer 200.

[0020] Reference numeral 280 designates a vibration generating device for generating a vibration under the control of the microcomputer 200. The vibration generating device 280 includes first and second transistors Q7 and Q8, and a motor 282. The base of the first transistor Q7 is connected to the output terminal OUT5 of the microcomputer 200 through a resistor R33, its collector is connected to electric power B+ and its emitter is connected to the motor 282 through resistors R35 and R37. The base of the second transistor Q9 is connected to the output terminal OUT4 of the microcomputer 200 through a resistor R39, its collector is connected between the emitter of the first transistor Q7 and the resistor R35 and its emitter is connected between the resistors R35 and R37.

[0021] Reference numeral 290 designates a far-infrared light generating device for generating a far-infrared light under the control of the microcomputer 200. The far-infrared light generating device 290 includes first and second transistors Q11 and Q13. The base of the first transistor Q11 is connected to the output terminal OUT6 of the microcomputer 200 through a resistor R41, its collector is connected to the electric power B+ and its emitter is connected to multiple far-infrared diodes UD1, UD2 and UD3 through resistors R43 and R45. The base of the second transistor Q13 is connected to the output terminal OUT4 of the microcomputer 200 through a resistor R47, its collector is connected between the emitter of the first transistor Q11 and the resistor R43 and its emitter is connected between the resistors R43 and R45.

[0022] The control device having the above described constitution initialises the microcomputer 200 by operation of the initial reset device 230 resetting it when the power key 108 of the key input device 220 is pushed to turn on power. After the microcomputer 200 is reset, as user pushes the operation selection key 114, the microcomputer 200 sets a beautifying process which is performed in the following order, namely cleansing step, massage step, nutrition supply step lifting step and cleansing step.

[0023] Thereafter, when the user pushes the weak intensity key 118, the microcomputer 200 sets the outputs of the galvanic ion current, far-infrared light, and vibration to the weak state and indicates the weak state operation by turning on the corresponding LED 118. Depending on the duration of the depression of the weak

intensity key 118, the level of vibration can be controlled from no vibration to strong vibration. When the user pushes the strong intensity key 122, the microcomputer 200 sets the outputs of the galvanic ion current, far-infrared light, and vibration to the strong state and indicates the strong state operation by turning on the corresponding LED 124. Depending on the duration of the depression of the strong intensity key 122, the output level of the melody or alarm can be controlled from no output to high output.

[0024] When the user pushes the skin measuring key 128, the microcomputer 200 sets the skin measuring operation.

[0025] As the battery power B+ is supplied, the DC-DC converting chip 260A of the galvanic ion current output 260 operates to output a driving signal to the output driving terminal DC. As the driving signal is output, high voltage is induced by the coil L and is output. The high voltage of the coil L is rectified through the diode D, is smoothed by the condenser C5 and is converted into a direct current power of galvanic ion current. Thereafter, the converted direct current is output to the user's facial skin through the resistors R11 and R13 and the facial skin contact device 102, and the grounding device 106.

[0026] Here, when the output level of the galvanic ion current is set to the strong level, the microcomputer 200 outputs a low voltage through the output terminal OUT1. The low voltage is applied to the base of the transistor Q1 of the power level control device 264 and turns off the transistor Q1. Accordingly, high voltage is applied to the input terminal IN of the DC-DC converting chip 260A and the galvanic ion current output device 260 outputs high level of galvanic ion current.

[0027] Meanwhile, when the output level of the galvanic ion current is set to the weak level, the microcomputer 200 outputs a high voltage through the output terminal OUT1. The high voltage is applied to the base of the transistor Q1 of the power level control device 264 and turns on the transistor Q1. Since the connecting point of the resistors R7 and R9 is equally grounded through the transistor Q1, low voltage is applied to the input terminal IN of the DC-DC converting chip 260A and the galvanic ion current output 260 outputs low level of galvanic ion current.

[0028] The ion current polarity switching device 266 varies the polarity of the ion current output by the galvanic ion current output device 260 under the control of the microcomputer 200. Thus, when the microcomputer 200 outputs a low voltage through the output terminal OUT2 and outputs a high voltage OUT3, the transistor Q3 of the ion current polarity switching device 266 turns off and the transistor Q5 turns on. Accordingly, the galvanic ion current output from the galvanic ion current output device 260 flows in the ground through the resistor R11, the facial skin contact device 102, the user's facial skin, the grounding device 106, the LEDs of the photo-coupler 272, and the transistor Q5 of the galvanic ion current polarity switching device 266 in the named

order. Positive galvanic ion current flows in the user's facial skin.

[0029] When the microcomputer 200 outputs a high voltage through the output terminal OUT2 and outputs a low voltage through the output terminal OUT3, the transistor Q3 of the ion current polarity switching device 266 turns on and the transistor Q5 turns off, unlike the above case. Accordingly, the galvanic ion current output from the galvanic ion current output device 260 flows in the ground through the resistor R13, the LEDs of the photo-coupler 272, the grounding device 106, the user's facial skin, the facial skin contact device 102, and the transistor Q3 of the galvanic ion current polarity switching device 266 in the named order. Negative galvanic iron current flows in the user's facial skin.

[0030] When the microcomputer 200 outputs high voltage through the output terminals OUT2 and OUT3, the transistors Q3 and Q5 turn on and accordingly the galvanic ion current does not flow in the user's facial skin.

[0031] As the galvanic ion current is supplied into the user's facial skin, the LEDs of the photo-coupler 272 of the galvanic iron current detecting device 270 emit light. The light receiving transistor of the photo-coupler 272 receives the light emitted from the LEDs of the photo-coupler 272, it turns on. Accordingly, a predetermined level of detecting signal according to the galvanic ion current flowing into the user's facial skin is output through the emitter of the light receiving transistor. The detecting signal is amplified through the first buffer 272 acting as the resistor and buffer, is secondly amplified through the second buffer 276 including the resistors R27, R28 and R31, and is input into the input terminal CIN of the microcomputer 200. Accordingly, user can determine whether the galvanic ion current is output into the user's facial skin, from the input signal of the input terminal CIN of the microcomputer 200.

[0032] When user pushes the skin measuring key 128 to select the skin measuring operation, the microcomputer 200 converts an analogue detecting signal input from the galvanic ion current detecting device 270 into a digital signal, determines the skin condition from the converted digital signal level, selectively turns on or off the LED 126 to display whether the user's skin condition is dry, normal, or oily, so that user can determine user's skin condition.

[0033] When the vibration operation is selected, the microcomputer 200 outputs a high voltage through the output terminal OUT5. The high voltage is applied to the base of the transistor Q7 through the resistor R33 of the vibration generating device 280 to turn on the transistor Q7. Accordingly, the power B+ is applied to the motor 282 through the transistor Q7 and the resistors R35 and R37 in the named order, so that the motor 282 is driven at a comparatively slow speed. The motor 282 has an eccentric cam (not shown). Therefore, as the motor 282 is driven, the eccentric cam is accordingly rotated and a weak level of vibration is generated.

[0034] Meanwhile, when user selects the strong level of the vibration operation, the microcomputer 200 outputs a high voltage through the output terminal OUT4. The high voltage is applied to the base of the transistor

5 Q9 through the resistor R39 of the vibration generating device 280 to turn on the transistor Q9. Accordingly, the power B+ having a relatively high voltage is applied to the motor 282 through the transistors Q7 and Q9 and the resistors R37 in the named order, so that the motor 282 is driven at a comparatively rapid speed and a strong level of vibration is generated.

[0035] When far-infrared output is selected, the microcomputer 200 outputs a high voltage through the output terminal OUT7. The high voltage is applied to the base of the transistor Q11 through the resistor R41 of the far-infrared light generating device 290, so that the transistor Q11 is turned on. At this time, the power B+ is respectively applied to the multiple far-infrared light diodes UD1, UD3 and UD5 through the transistor Q11 and the resistors R43 and R45 in the named order, so that the diodes UD1, UD3 and UD5 are turned on and a weak level of far-infrared light is output to the user's facial skin through the far-infrared output device 104.

[0036] Here, when the user selects the strong level, the microcomputer 200 outputs a high voltage through the output terminal OUT4. The high voltage is applied to the base of the transistor Q13 through the resistor 47, so that the transistor Q13 is turned on. At this time, the power B+ is respectively applied to the multiple far-infrared diodes UD1, UD3, and UD5 through the transistors Q11 and Q13, and the resistor R45, so that a large amount of current flows through the diodes UD1, UD3, and UD5 and a high level of far-infrared light is output.

[0037] FIG. 3 to FIG. 11 are flow charts showing a control method according to the present invention. Referring to FIG. 3, the microcomputer 220 determines whether or not the power key of the key input device 220 is input (S302). The microcomputer 200 turns on the power when the power key is input (S304). Thereafter, the microcomputer 200 is initialised according to the output signal of the initial reset device 230 (S306).

[0038] After the initialising step (S306) is completed, the microcomputer 200 selects the cleansing step which is the first step of the beautifying process and displays the selected cleansing step by turning on the corresponding LED (S308). Thereafter, the microcomputer 200 designates the outputs of the galvanic ion current, far-infrared light and vibration operations as the weak level (S310) and then determines the battery charge level from the output signal of the battery detecting device 250 (S312).

[0039] When the battery charge level is less than a first critical voltage (S314), it is again determined whether the battery charge level is less than or equal to a second critical voltage which is less than the first critical voltage (S316). When the battery charge level is less than or equal to the second critical voltage, the micro-

computer 200 turns off the power to prevent the battery from being discharged over a selected level (S318). When the battery charge level is greater than the second critical voltage, the microcomputer 200 determines that the battery power is not over-discharged, turns on the LED 132 to display the deficiency of the battery power (S320), and determines whether or not the power key signal is input (S322).

[0040] From the power key input determining step (S322), when it is determined that a key signal has been input, a key signal input routine (later described) is performed (S324). When it is determined that the key signal has not been input during the power key signal input step (S322), the microcomputer 200 determines whether the skin measuring step is being performed (S326). When it is determined that the skin measuring step is being performed, a skin measuring routine (later described) is performed (S328) and when it is determined that the skin measuring step is not being performed, a skin beautifying routine (later described) is performed (S330).

[0041] The key signal input routine noted in the key signal input routine performing step S324 is performed as shown in FIG. 4. The key signal input routine first performs a step of outputting a selected key input sound (S402). The key input sound is output for a selected time by controlling the alarm/melody output device 240 of FIG. 2. The microcomputer 200 performs a step of determining what the input key signal is (S404).

[0042] When it is determined that the input key signal is the power input from the key input determining step (S404), the power is turned off (S408).

[0043] When it is determined that the input key signal is not the power input in the key input determining step (S404), the microcomputer 200 determines whether or not the input key signal is the beautifying step selection key input (S410).

[0044] When it is determined that the input key signal is the beautifying step selection key input from the beautifying step determining step (S410), a beautifying step selecting routine (later described) is performed.

[0045] When it is determined that the key signal is not the beautifying step selection key input from the beautifying step determining step (S410), a step of determining whether or not the input key signal is the strong intensity key input, is performed (S414).

[0046] When the key signal is the strong intensity key signal input, an input time of the strong intensity key signal is counted (S418). Thereafter, it is determined that the input time is more than a pre-designated time (S418). When the input time is less the pre-designated time, output levels of the galvanic ion current, vibration and far-infrared light are set as the strong level and the strong level setting is displayed. When the counted time is more than the pre-designated time, it is determined that a melody output is designated (S422).

[0047] When a melody output is designated from the melody designation determining step (S422), a com-

mand stopping the melody output is designated (S424), while when a melody output is not designated, the melody output is designated (S426).

[0048] From the strong intensity key input determining step (S414), when the strong intensity key 122 is not input, it is determined that the weak intensity key 118 is input (S428).

[0049] When the weak intensity key is input, an input time of the weak intensity key signal is counted (S430).

10 [0050] Thereafter, it is determined that the input time of the weak intensity key signal is more than a pre-designated time (S432). When the input time is less the pre-designated time, output levels of the galvanic ion current, vibration and far-infrared light are set as the weak level and the weak level setting is displayed (S434). Meanwhile, when the input time of the weak intensity key signal is more than the pre-designated time, it is determined whether or not a vibration output command is set (S436).

20 [0051] Meanwhile, when the vibration output command is set, a command stopping the vibration is set (S438), while when the vibration output command is not set, the vibration output command is set (S440).

[0052] Referring to FIG. 5, the beautifying step selection routine mentioned in the step S412 of FIG. 4 first performs a step of displaying an input of the beautifying step selection key 114. Thereafter, the present beautifying step is determined (S504). Afterwards, it is determined whether or not the present beautifying step is the cleansing step (S506).

[0053] When the present set beautifying step is the cleansing step, the massage step is set and is displayed by turning on the corresponding LED 112. While, when the present set beautifying step is not the cleansing step, it is determined whether or not the present set beautifying step is the massage step (S510).

[0054] When the present set beautifying step is the massage step, the nutrition supply step is set and is displayed by turning on the corresponding LED 112. While when the present set beautifying step is not the massage step, it is determined whether or not the present set beautifying step is the nutrition supply step (S514).

[0055] When the present set beautifying step is the nutrition supply step, the lifting step is performed and is displayed by turning on the corresponding LED 112. While when the present set beautifying step is not the nutrition supply step, it is determined whether or not the present set beautifying step is the lifting step (S518).

[0056] When the present set beautifying step is the lifting step, the cleansing step is performed and is displayed by turning on the corresponding LED 112.

[0057] In other words, in the beautifying step selection step, as the beautifying step selection key 114 is

pushed, the cleansing step, the massage step, the nutrition supply step, the lifting step, and the cleansing step is repeatedly set in the named order.

[0058] Referring to FIG. 6, the skin measuring step mentioned in FIG. 3 and FIG. 4 first performs a step of counting the time taken in performing the skin measuring step (S602). Afterwards, it is determined whether or not the counting time is more than a pre-designated time, for example, 20 seconds (S604).

[0059] When the counting time is less than the pre-designated time, the skin measuring signal output from the galvanic ion current detecting device 270 is input (S606). Thereafter, the input skin measuring signal is converted into a digital signal (S608). Thereafter, it is determined that the digital signal is at a level (S610). Thereafter, from the determining step (S610) of the level, the skin condition is determined and is displayed by selectively turning on the multiple LEDs 126.

[0060] For example, when the measured skin condition is oily, two LEDs 126 positioned at the left side are turned on, when the measured skin condition is normal, LED 126 positioned at the centre is turned on, and when the measured skin condition is dry, two LEDs 126 positioned at the right side are turned on.

[0061] When the counting time is more than the pre-designated time from the pre-designated time determining step (S604), the microcomputer 200 stops to display the skin measuring state and ends the skin measuring operation by turning off all the LEDs 126.

[0062] Referring to FIG. 7, the skin beautifying routine mentioned in the step S330 of FIG. 3 first performs a step of determining the present skin beautifying step (S702). Afterwards, it is determined whether or not the present skin beautifying step is the cleansing step.

[0063] When the present skin beautifying step is the cleansing step, the cleansing routine is performed (S706) to thereby remove toxins and waste products contained deeply in the skin.

[0064] Meanwhile when the present skin beautifying step is not the cleansing step from the determining step (S704) of the cleansing step, it is determined the present skin beautifying step is the massage step (S708).

[0065] When the present skin beautifying step is the massage step, the massage routine (to be described later) is performed (S710) and whereby pores of the facial skin is expanded or reduced, resulting in the facial skin becoming resilient and bright.

[0066] Meanwhile when the present skin beautifying step is not the massage step from the determining step (S708) of the massage step, it is determined the present skin beautifying step is the nutrition supply step (S712).

[0067] When the present skin beautifying step is the nutrition supply step, the nutrition supply step (to be described later) is performed (S714) and whereby pores of the facial skin are expanded or reduced, resulting in the facial skin becoming resilient and bright.

[0068] Referring to FIG. 8, the cleansing routine mentioned in the step S706 of FIG. 7 first determines wheth-

er or not the melody output is set (S802). In other words, it is determined whether or not the melody output is set by pushing the strong level key 122 over a pre-designated time.

5 [0069] When the melody output is set from the determining step (S802) of the melody output, the alarm/melody output device 240 outputs a melody by the control of the microcomputer 200 (S804) and the DC-DC converting device 262 of the galvanic ion current output device 260 elevates the power level to a selected level of strong level or weak level according to user's selection. Thereafter, it is determined whether or not the galvanic ion current is output onto the user's facial skin from the skin measuring signal output from the galvanic ion current detecting device 270.

[0070] When the galvanic ion current is not output onto the user's facial skin in the determining step S806, the corresponding LED 112 is turned on and whereby the stop of the cleansing step is displayed and simultaneously it is displayed that the galvanic ion current is not output onto the user's facial skin (S808).

[0071] Afterwards, it is temporarily stopped to count a time taken in performing the cleansing step (S810) and to output far-infrared light and operate the motor 282 (S812).

[0072] When the galvanic ion current is output onto the user's facial skin in the step S806, the microcomputer 200 turns off the corresponding LED 112 and displays performing the cleansing step. In the step S816, the microcomputer 200 counts a time taken in performing the cleansing step and thereafter determines whether or not the counting time is more than the pre-designated time. In other words, it is determined whether or not the counting time is more than the pre-designated time by counting only the time performing the cleansing step after the galvanic ion current is output onto the user's facial skin.

[0073] When the counting time of the cleansing step is less than the pre-designated time in the step S818, the microcomputer 200 outputs a galvanic ion current corresponding to the cleansing step in the step S820.

[0074] As shown in FIG. 12A, the galvanic ion current corresponding to the cleansing step has one period of 2T and includes a intermittent positive galvanic ion current output for a first selected time T, for example 2-3 seconds, and a continuous positive galvanic ion current output for a second selected time T, for example, 2-3 seconds. The intermittent positive galvanic ion current and the continuous positive galvanic ion current are alternatively output for given time periods. Here, the positive galvanic ion current has a frequency of approximately 2-10Hz.

[0075] Thereafter, a far-infrared light is output by controlling the far-infrared light generating device 290 according to user's selection level of strong or weak level (S822). Thereafter, it is determined whether or not the vibration step is set (S824).

[0076] That is, it is determined whether or not the vibration step is set by pushing the weak level key 122 in

the step S428 of FIG. 4.

[0077] When the vibration step has been set, the microcomputer 200 drives the motor 282 to generate the vibration by controlling the vibration generating device 280 according to user's selection of the strong or weak level.

[0078] Thus, the cleansing step repeats to output a positive galvanic ion current having a strong or weak level and a selected frequency per a specific period T, outputs the far-infrared light, and generates the vibration, thereby removing toxins and waste products contained deeply in the skin.

[0079] In this state, when the performing time of the cleansing step which is set in the step S818 elapses, the microcomputer 200 sets the following skin beautifying step of the massage step and ends the cleansing step (S828).

[0080] Referring to FIG. 9, the massage routine mentioned in the step S710 of FIG. 7 first determines whether or not the melody output is set (S902).

[0081] When the melody output is set from the determining step (S902) of the melody output, the alarm/melody output device 240 outputs a melody by the control of the microcomputer 200 (S904) and the DC-DC converting device 262 of the galvanic ion current output device 260 elevates the power level to a selected level of strong level or weak level according to user's selection.

[0082] Thereafter, it is determined whether or not the galvanic ion current is output onto the user's facial skin measuring signal output from the galvanic ion current detecting device 270.

[0083] When the galvanic ion current is not output onto the user's facial skin in the determining step S906, the corresponding LED 112 is turned on and whereby the stop' of the massage step is displayed and simultaneously it is displayed that the galvanic ion current is not output onto the user's facial skin (S908).

[0084] Afterwards, it is temporarily stopped to count a time performing the massage step (S910) and simultaneously stopped to output far-infrared light and operate the motor 282 (S912).

[0085] When the galvanic ion current is output onto the user's facial skin in the step S906, the microcomputer 200 turns off the corresponding LED 112 and displays performing the massage step. In the step S916, the microcomputer 200 counts a time taken in performing the massage step and in the step S918 thereafter determines whether or not the counting time is more than the pre-designated time.

[0086] When the counting time of the massage step is less than the pre-designated time in the step S918, the microcomputer 200 outputs a galvanic ion current corresponding to the massage step in the step S920.

[0087] As shown in FIG. 12B, the galvanic ion current corresponding to the massage step has one period of 3T and includes a intermittent positive galvanic ion current output for a first time period of T, for example, 2-3 seconds, a intermittent negative galvanic ion current

output for a second time period of T, for example, 2-3 seconds, and a positive and negative alternating ion current output for a third time period of T, for example, 2-3 seconds. The positive galvanic ion current, the negative galvanic ion current, and the positive and negative alternating galvanic ion current are repeatedly output in the named order for given time periods and each of them has a frequency of 2-10 Hz.

[0088] Thereafter, a far-infrared light is output by controlling the far-infrared light generating device 290 according to user's selection level of strong or weak level (S922). Thereafter, it is determined whether or not the vibration step is set (S924).

[0089] When the vibration step has been set, the microcomputer 200 drives the motor 282 to generate a vibration by controlling the vibration generating device 280 according to user's selection of the strong or weak level.

[0090] Thus, the massage step repeats to output a positive galvanic ion current and a negative galvanic ion current each having a strong or weak level and a selected frequency per a specific period T, outputs the far-infrared light, and generates the vibration, thereby removing toxins and waste products contained deeply in the skin, whereby pores of the facial skin are expanded or reduced, resulting in the facial skin becoming resilient and bright.

[0091] In this state, when the performing time of the massage step which is set in the step S918 elapses, the microcomputer 200 sets the following skin beautifying step of the nutrition supply step and ends the massage step (S928).

[0092] Referring to FIG. 10, the nutrition supply routine mentioned in the step S714 of FIG. 7 first determines whether or not the melody output has been set (S1002).

[0093] When the melody output has been set from the determining step (S1002) of the melody output, the alarm/melody output device 240 outputs a melody by the control of the microcomputer 200 (S1004). Thereafter, it is determined whether or not the galvanic ion current is output onto the user's facial skin (S1006).

[0094] When the galvanic ion current is not output onto the user's facial skin in the galvanic ion current output determining step S1006, the corresponding LED 112 is turned on (S1008) and whereby it is displayed that the nutrition supply step is stopped and it is displayed that the galvanic ion current is not output onto the user's facial skin.

[0095] Afterwards, it is temporarily stopped to count a time taken in performing the nutrition supply step in the step S1010 and to output far-infrared light and operate the motor 282 in the step S1012.

[0096] When the galvanic ion current is output onto the user's facial skin in the step S1006, the microcomputer 200 turns off the corresponding LED 112 in the step S1014, thereby displaying performing the nutrition supply step. In the step S1016, the microcomputer 200

counts a time taken in performing the nutrition supply step and thereafter determines whether or not the counting time is greater than the pre-designated time in the step S1018.

[0097] When it is determined that the counting time is less than the pre-designated time in the step S1018, the microcomputer outputs a galvanic ion current corresponding to the nutrition supply step in the steps S1020.

[0098] As shown in FIG. 12C, the galvanic ion current corresponding to the nutrition supply step has one period of $2T$ and includes a intermittent negative galvanic ion current output for a first selected time T and a continuous negative galvanic ion current output for a second selected time T . The intermittent negative galvanic ion current and the continuous negative galvanic ion current are alternatively output for given time periods. Here, the intermittent negative galvanic ion current has a frequency of approximately 2-10 Hz.

[0099] Thereafter, a far-infrared light is output by controlling the far-infrared light generating device 290 according to user's selection level of strong or weak level (S1022). Thereafter, it is determined whether or not the vibration step has been set (S1024).

[0100] When the vibration step has been set, the microcomputer 200 drives the motor 282 to generate the vibration by controlling the vibration generating device 280 according to the user's selection of the strong or weak level (S1024).

[0101] Thus, the nutrition supply step repeats to output a negative galvanic ion current having a strong or weak level and a selected frequency per a specific period T , outputs the far-infrared light, and generates the vibration, thereby supplying nutrition to deeply to the skin.

[0102] In this state, when the performing time of the nutrition supply step which is set in the step S1018 elapses, the microcomputer 200 sets the following skin beautifying step of the lifting step and ends the nutrition supply step.

[0103] Referring to FIG. 11, the lifting routine mentioned in the step S718 of FIG. 7 first determines whether or not the melody output has been set (S1102).

[0104] When the melody output has been set from the determining step (S1102) of the melody output, the alarm/melody output device 240 outputs a melody by the control of the microcomputer 200 (S1004). Thereafter, it is determined whether or not the galvanic ion current is output onto the user's facial skin (S1106).

[0105] When the galvanic ion current is not output onto the user's facial skin in the galvanic ion current output determining step S1106, the corresponding LED 112 is turned on (S1108) and whereby it is displayed that the lifting step is stopped and it is displayed that the galvanic ion current is not output onto the user's facial skin.

[0106] Afterwards, it is temporarily stopped to count a time taken in performing the lifting step in the step S1110 and to output far-infrared light in the step S1112.

[0107] When the galvanic ion current is output onto

the user's facial skin in the step S1106, the microcomputer 200 turns off the corresponding LED 112 in the step S1114, thereby displaying performing the lifting step. In the step S1116, the microcomputer 200 counts a time taken in performing the lifting step and thereafter determines whether or not the counting time is more than the pre-designated time in the step S1118.

[0108] When the counting time of the lifting step is less than the pre-designed time in the step S1118, the microcomputer 200 outputs a galvanic ion current corresponding to the lifting step in the step S1120.

[0109] As shown in FIG. 12D, the galvanic ion current corresponding to the lifting step in the step S1120 has an intermittent positive and negative galvanic ion current in which the pulse width is decreasingly varied for one period of $2T$. The intermittent positive and negative alternating galvanic ion current has a frequency which is varied within a range of 0.5-5 Hz.

[0110] Thereafter, a far-infrared light is output by controlling the far-infrared light generating device 290 according to user's selection level of strong or weak level (S1122).

[0111] Thus, the lifting step outputs a galvanic ion current of an intermittent tooth wave in which a frequency is varied in a frequency range of 0.5-5 Hz and outputs a far-infrared light, whereby pores of the facial skin is expended or reduced, resulting in facial skin becoming resilient and bright.

[0112] In this state, when the performing time of the lifting step which is set in the step S1118 elapses, the microcomputer 200 ends all the beautifying steps.

[0113] The vibration function follows a noise during the performing of the cleansing step, the massage step, and the nutrition supply step. Accordingly, the vibration level is controlled according to user's selection. In other words, the vibration control function is provided for users who dislike noise from the motor. Moreover, the melody output level setting function is provided for users who dislike noise but need the vibration function.

[0114] Meanwhile, although the generation of vibration by driving the motor, rhythmical vibrations can also be generated by, for example, periodically stopping the motor.

45

Claims

1. A portable skin beautifying apparatus adapted to perform a skin measurement operation and a plurality of skin beautifying operations, comprising control means adapted to select, in dependence upon the presence, absence or nature of a user input, the skin measurement operation or a skin beautifying operation and to cause the apparatus to perform the selected operation.
2. Apparatus according to claim 1 in which the control means selects the skin measurement operation in

the absence of a user input.

3. Apparatus according to claim 1 or claim 2 which is adapted to perform the said plurality of skin beautifying operations in a predetermined series and the control means is adapted to cause the apparatus to begin at a point in that series determined by the nature of a user input received.

4. Apparatus according to claim 3 in which the predetermined series of skin beautifying operations comprises, in the following sequence:

- a cleansing operation;
- a massage operation;
- a nutrition supply operation; and
- a lifting operation.

5. Apparatus according to claim 4 adapted to output an intermittent positive galvanic ion current and a continuous positive galvanic ion current during the cleansing operation.

6. Apparatus according to claim 4 or claim 5 adapted to output an intermittent positive galvanic ion current, an intermittent negative galvanic ion current and an alternating galvanic ion current during the massage operation.

7. Apparatus according to any one of claims 4-6 adapted to output an intermittent negative galvanic ion current and a continuous negative galvanic ion current during the nutrition supply operation.

8. Apparatus according to any one of claims 5-7 in which the intermittent and/or alternating galvanic ion current or currents have a frequency of 2-10Hz.

9. Apparatus according to any one of claims 4-8 adapted to output a variable-frequency alternating galvanic ion current during the lifting operation.

10. Apparatus according to claim 9 in which the variable frequency is in the range of 0.5-5Hz.

11. Apparatus according to any one of claims 5-10 in which the galvanic ion current or currents are output for a period of 2-3 seconds.

12. Apparatus according to any one of claims 4-11 adapted to output far-infrared light during one or more of the skin beautifying operations.

13. Apparatus according to any one of claims 4-12 adapted to vibrate during one or more of the skin beautifying operations.

14. Apparatus according to any one of claims 4-13

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

adapted to output the galvanic ion currents, to output the far-infrared light and/or to vibrate at strong and weak levels, and to select the strong or weak level in dependence upon the nature of a user input.

15. Apparatus according to any preceding claim in adapted to determine skin condition from the level of a galvanic ion current output during the skin measurement operation.

16. Apparatus according to any preceding claim in which the control means includes a microcomputer and a keypad' and the apparatus also includes:

- a galvanic ion current device for elevating the battery level, outputting galvanic ion current under the control of the microcomputer and determining the level of the galvanic ion current output;
- means for vibrating the apparatus under the control of the microcomputer; and
- a far-infrared light generating device for generating far-infrared light under the control of the microcomputer.

17. Apparatus according to claim 16 in which the galvanic ion current device comprises:

- a DC/DC converter for elevating the battery level;
- a power level control device for controlling the output level of the DC/DC converter; and
- a galvanic ion current polarity switching device for switching the polarity of the galvanic ion current output.

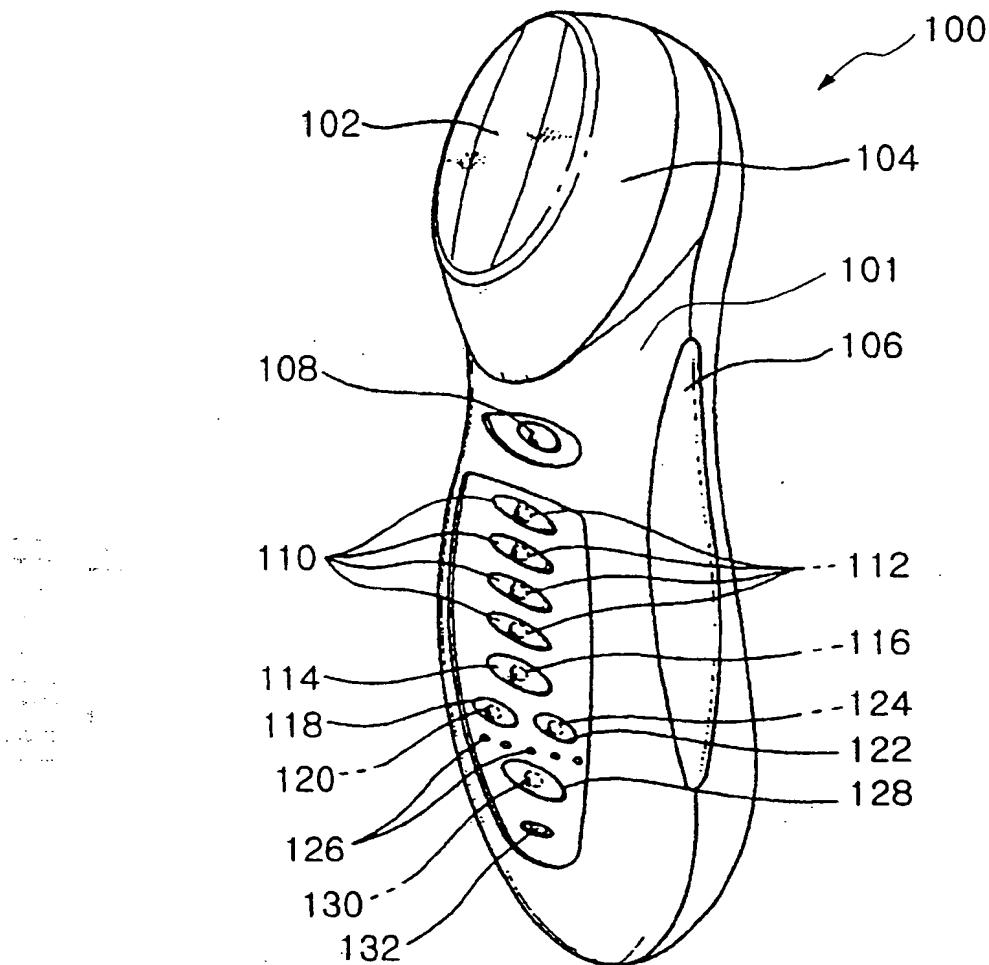


FIG. 1

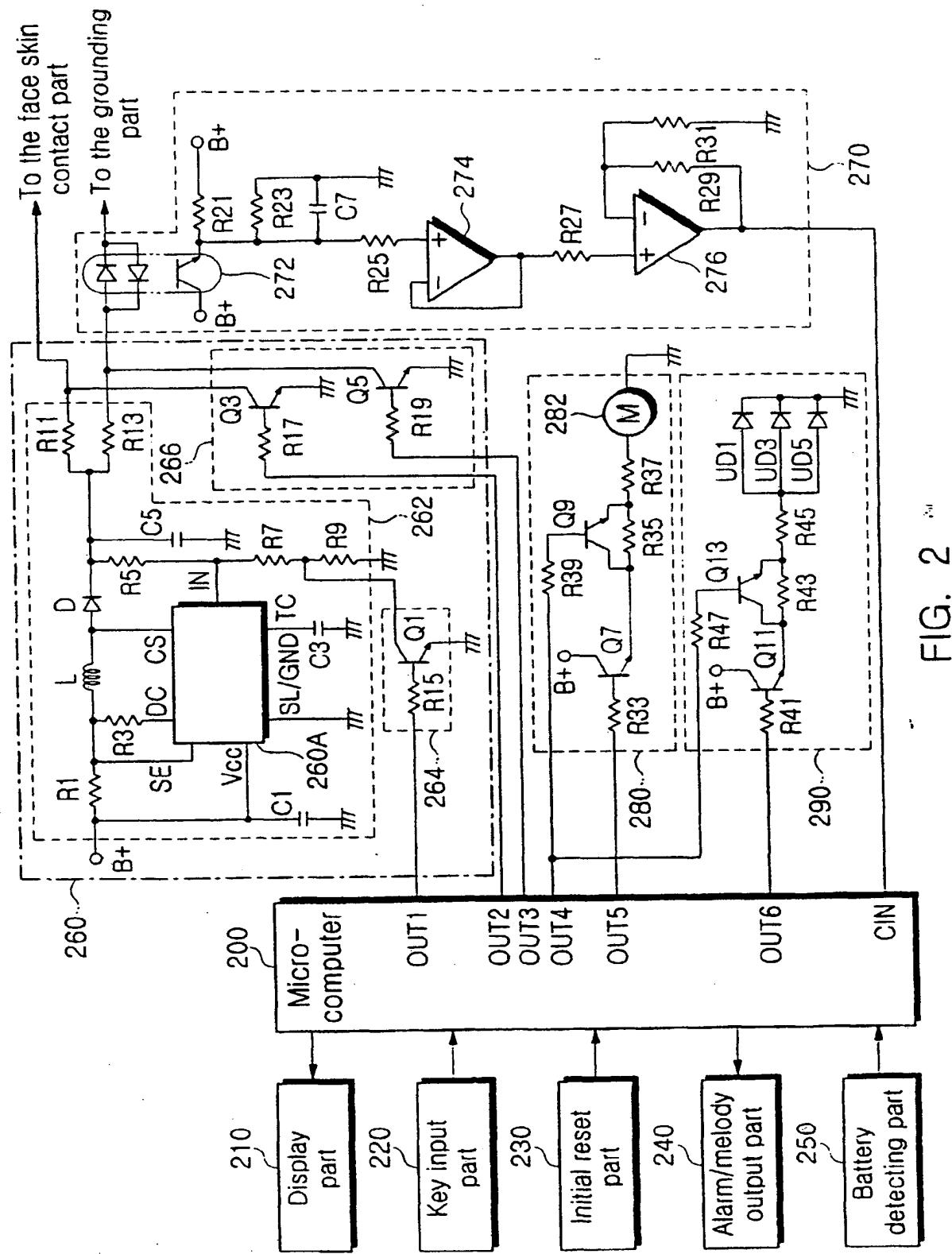


FIG. 2

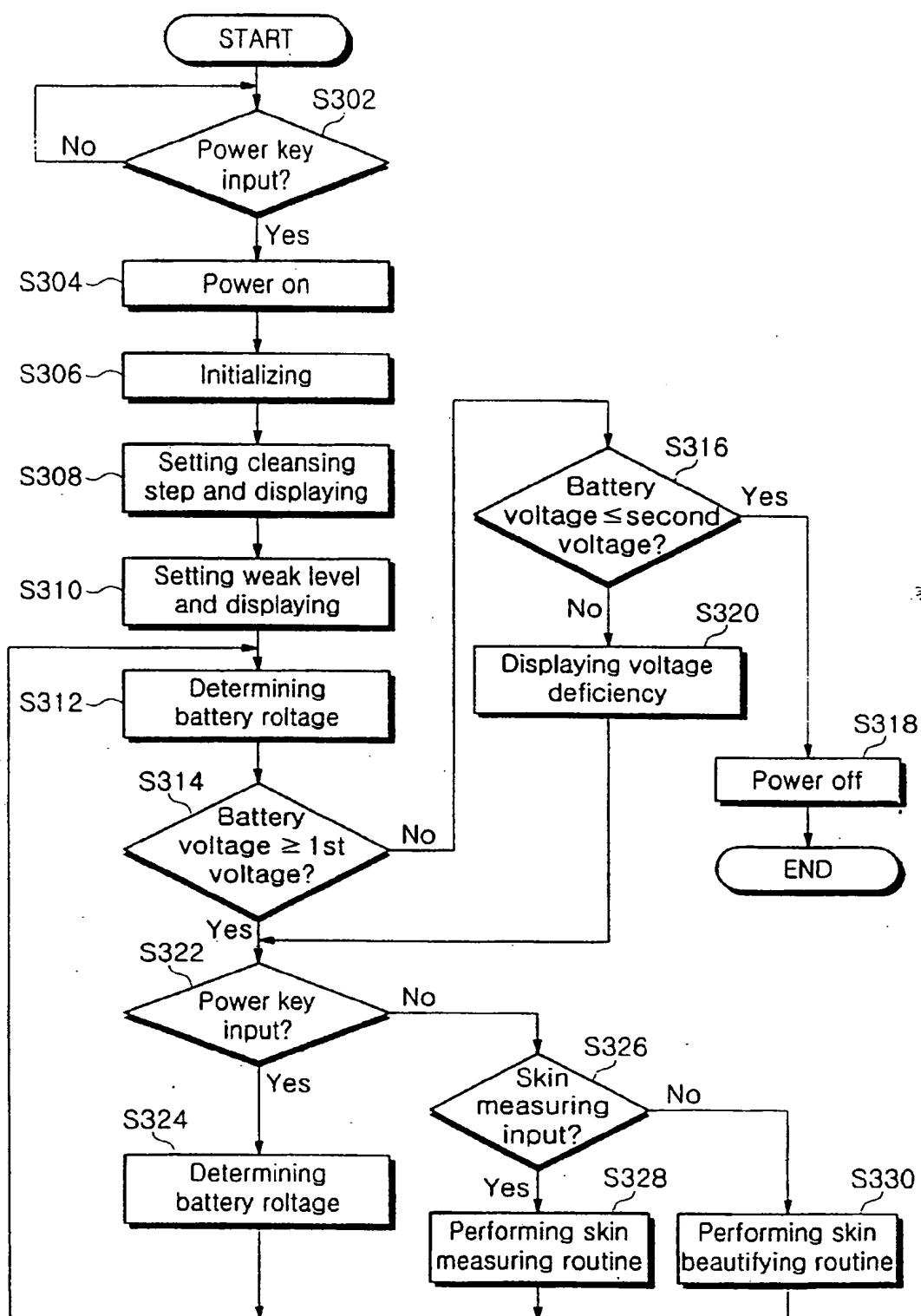


FIG. 3

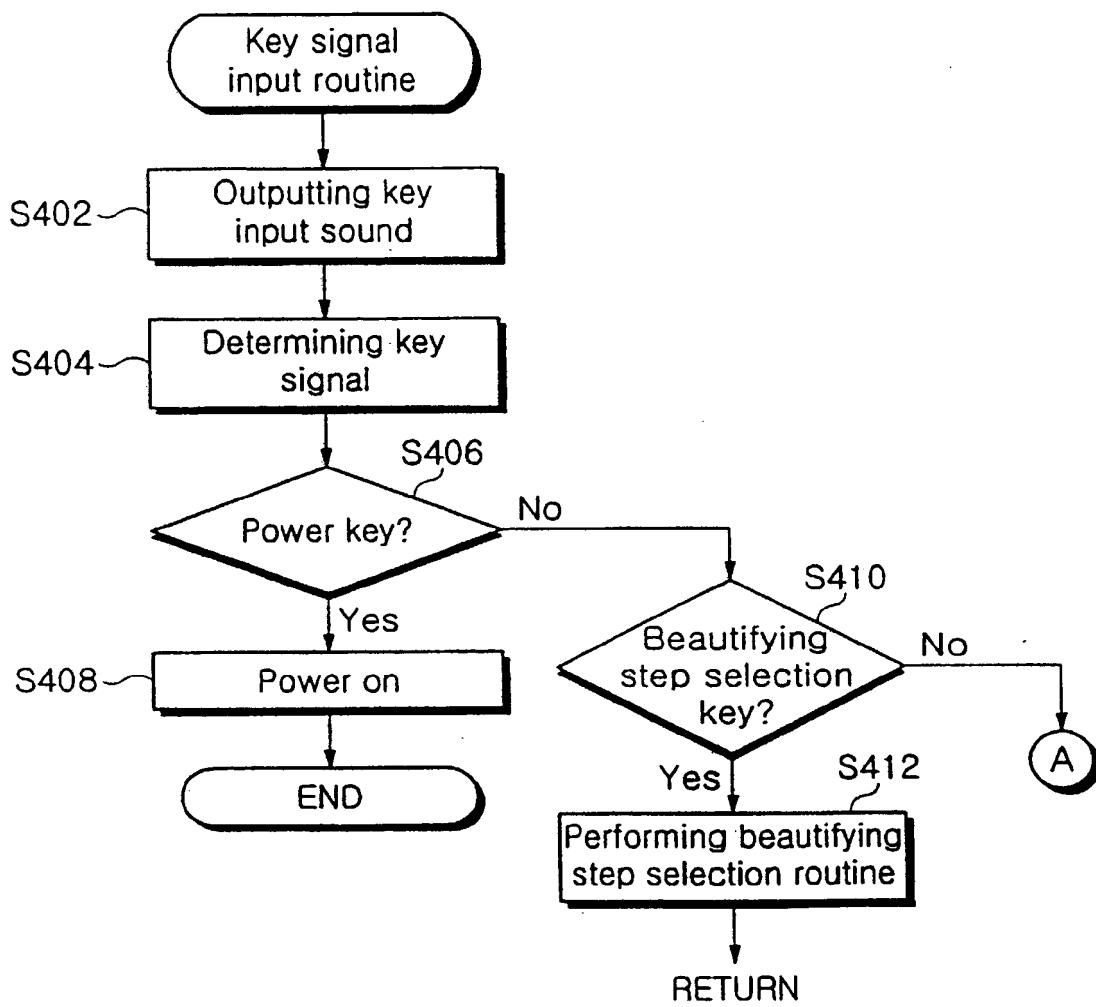


FIG. 4-1

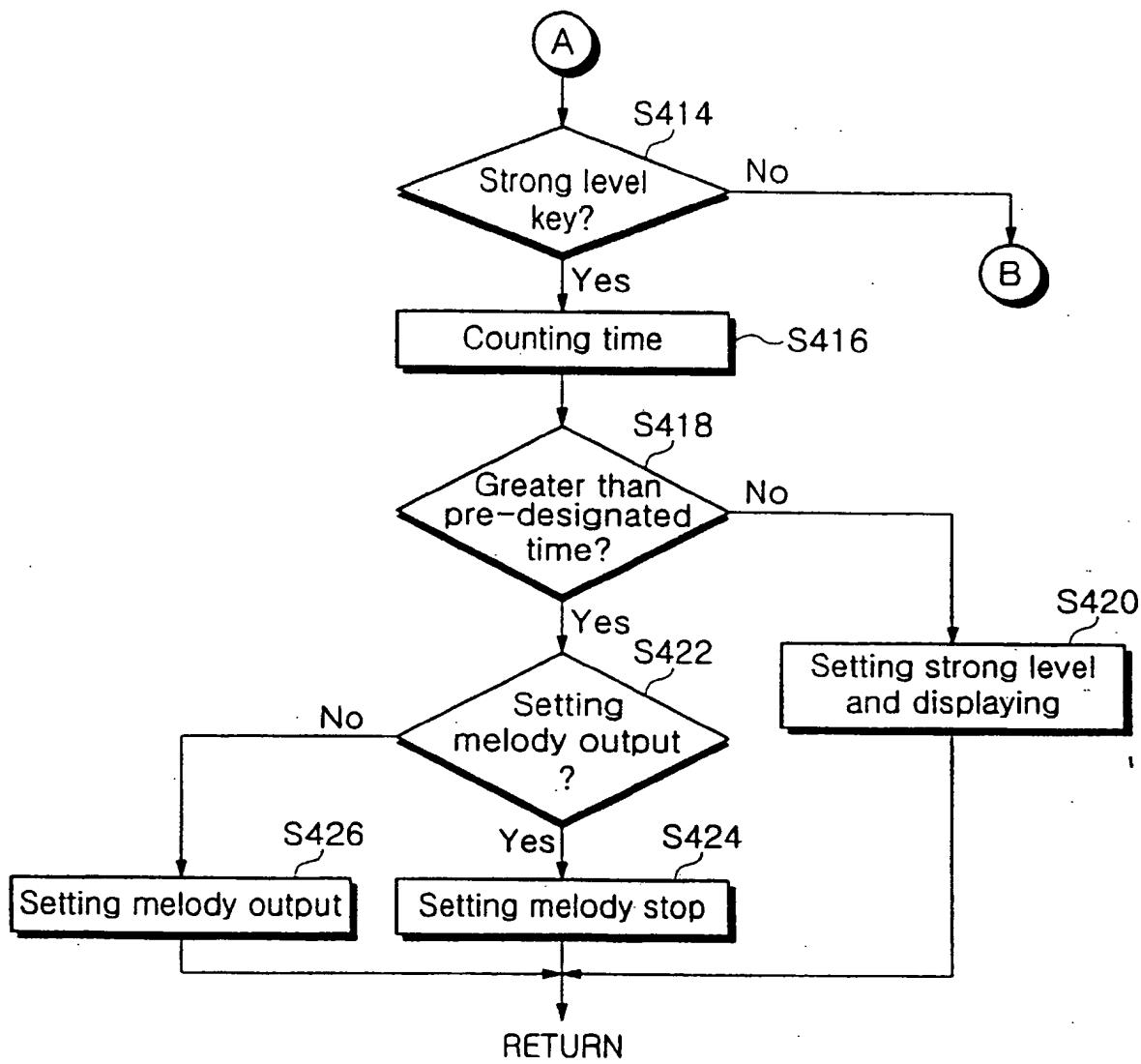


FIG. 4-2

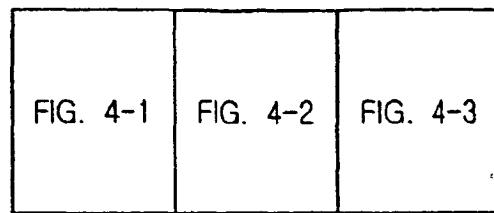
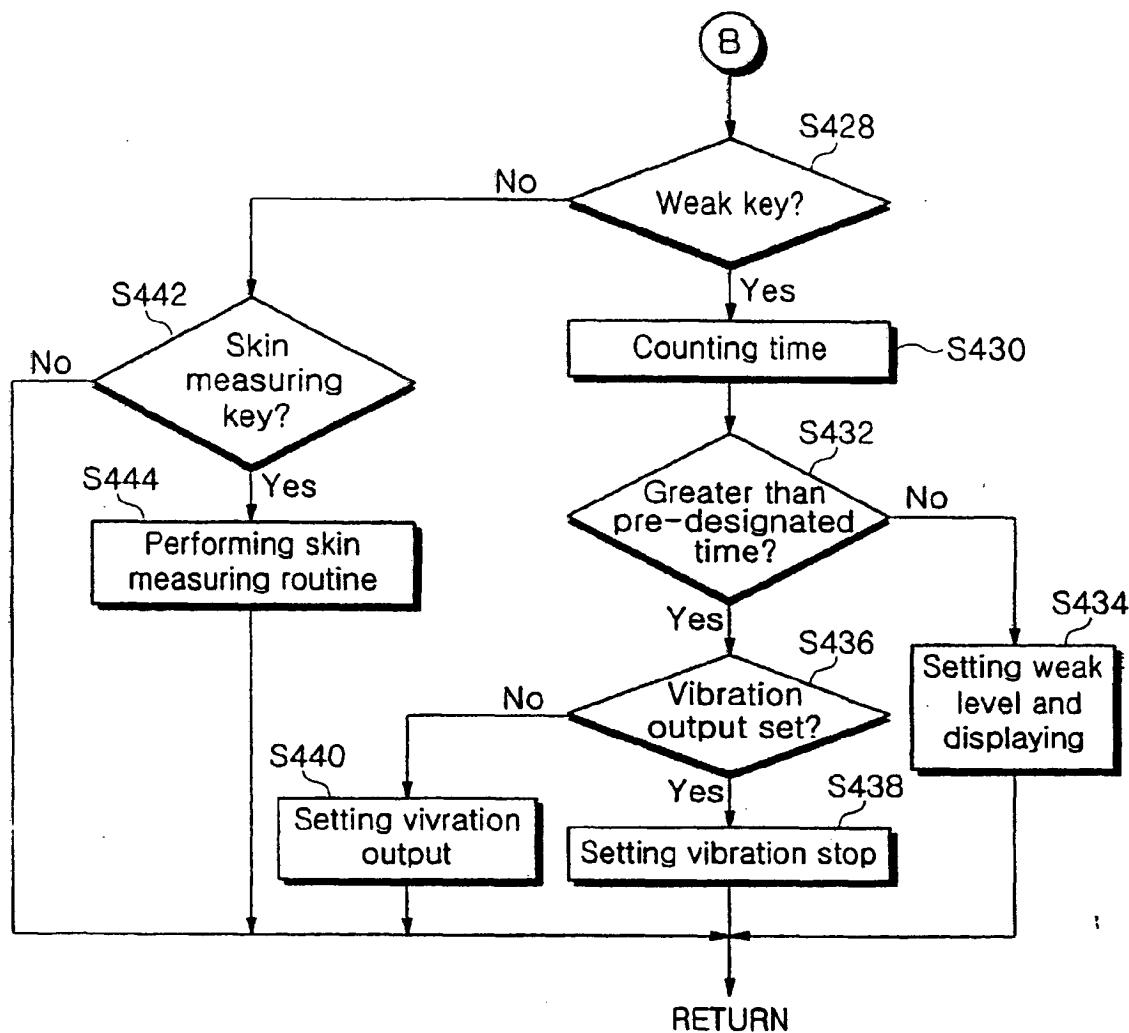


FIG. 4

FIG. 4-3

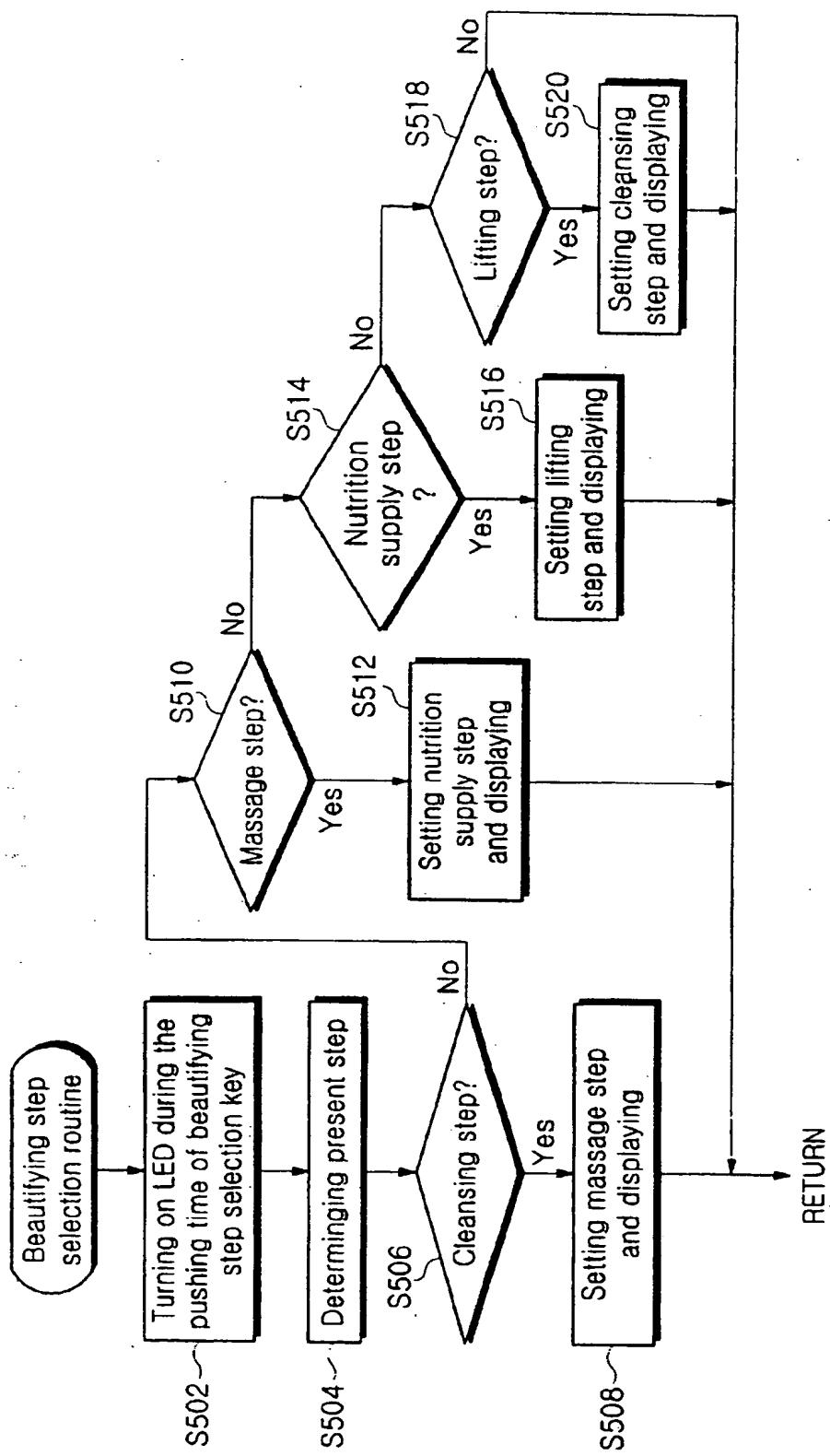


FIG. 5

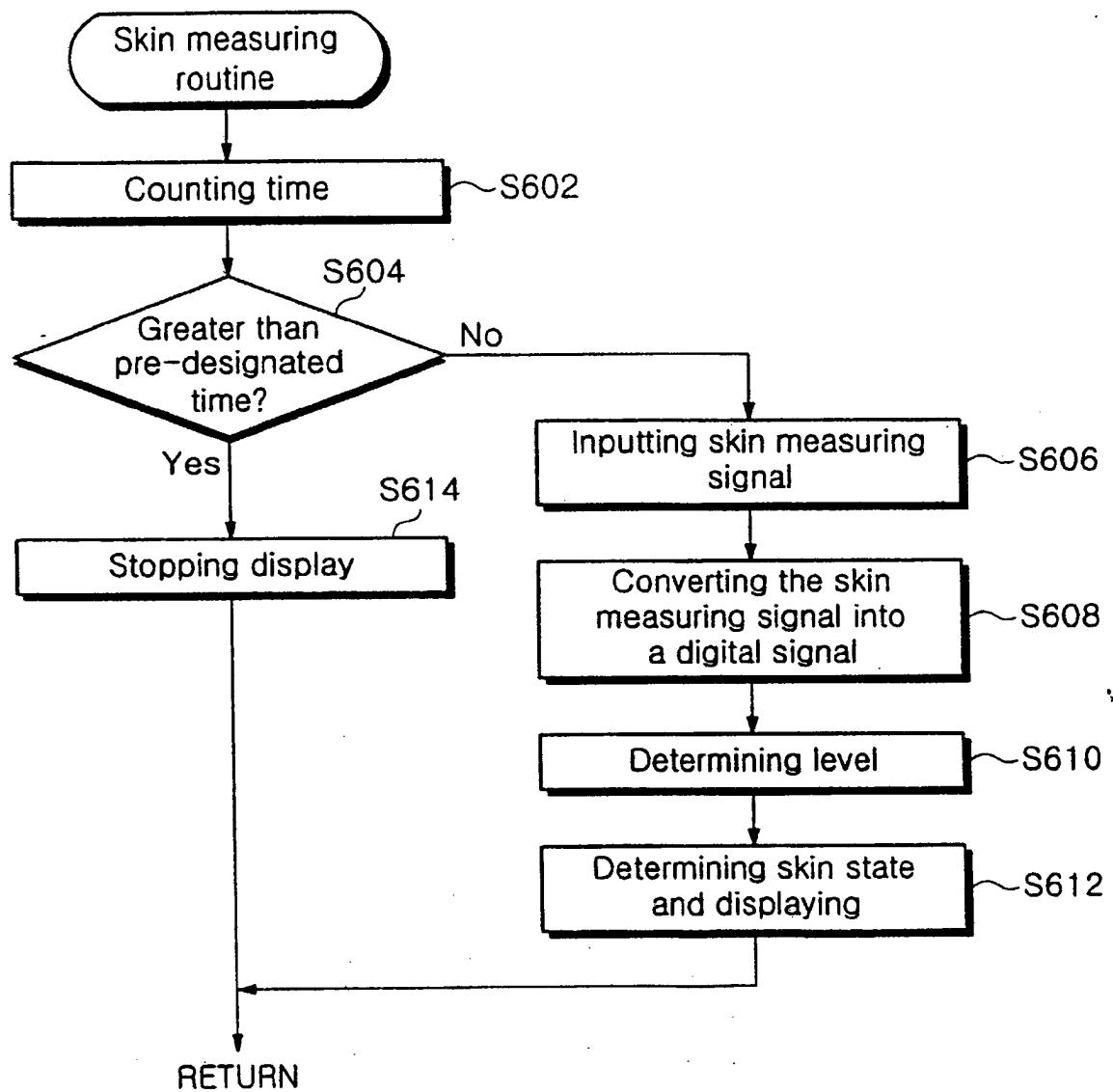


FIG. 6

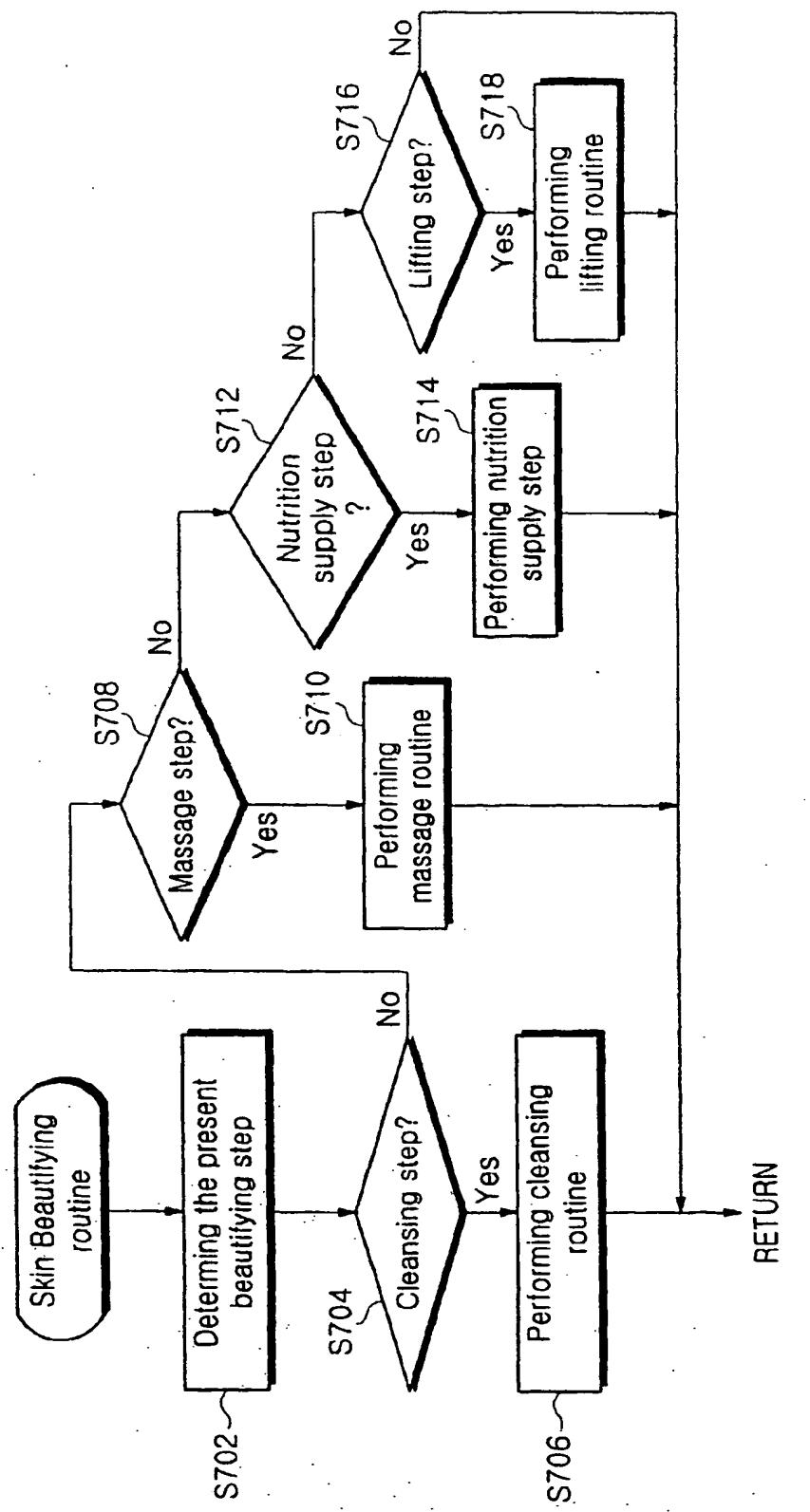


FIG. 7

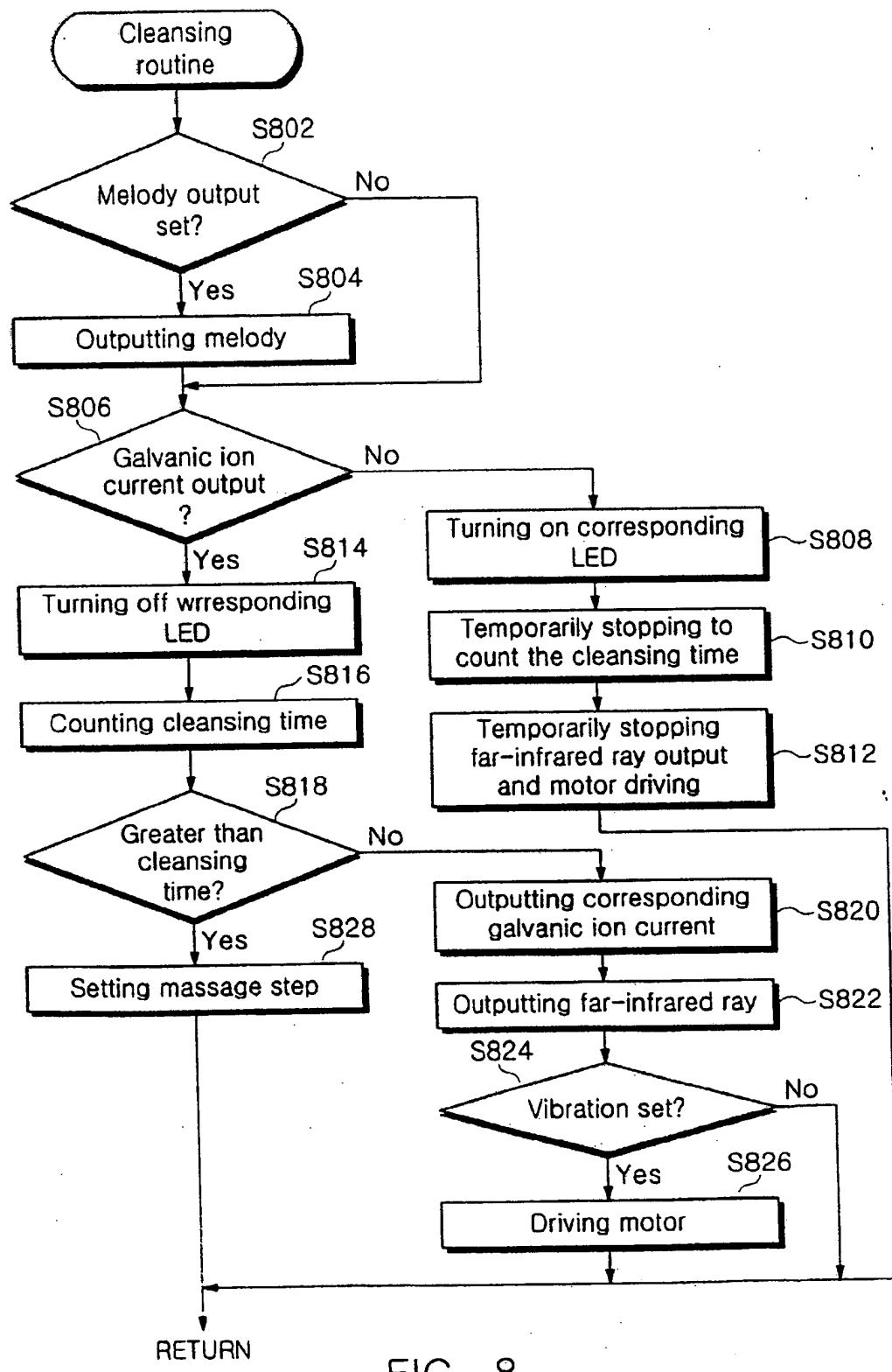


FIG. 8

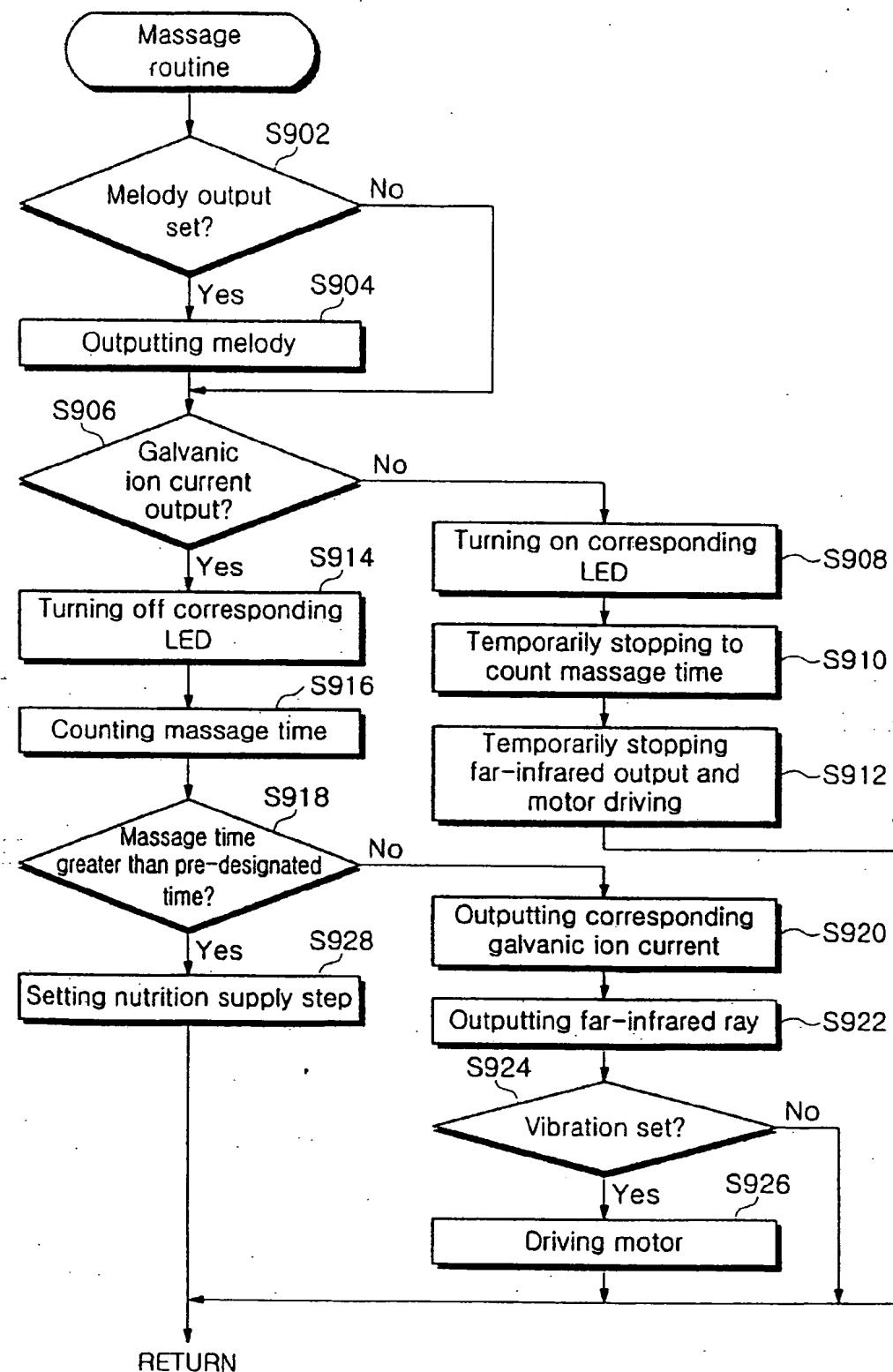


FIG. 9

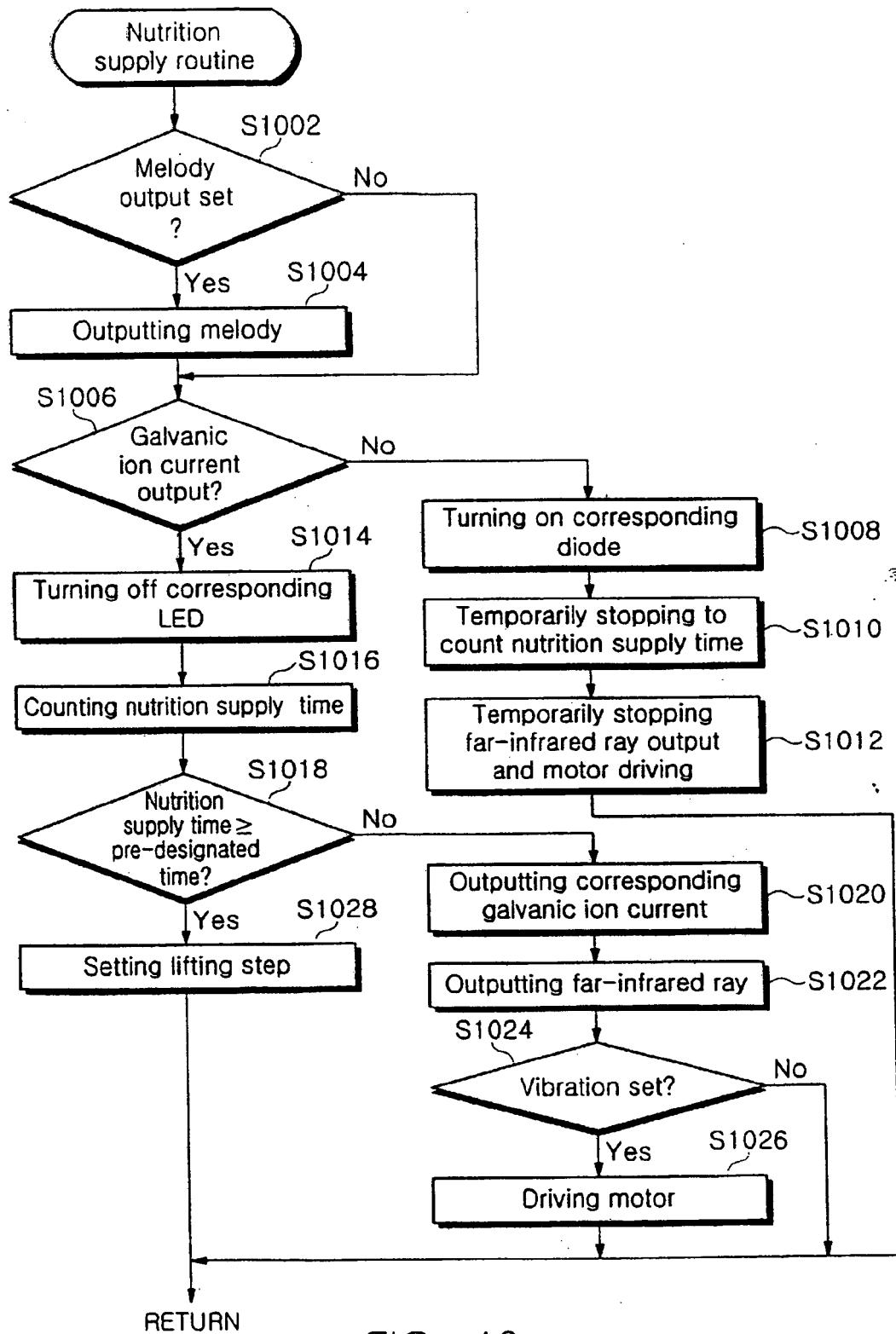


FIG. 10

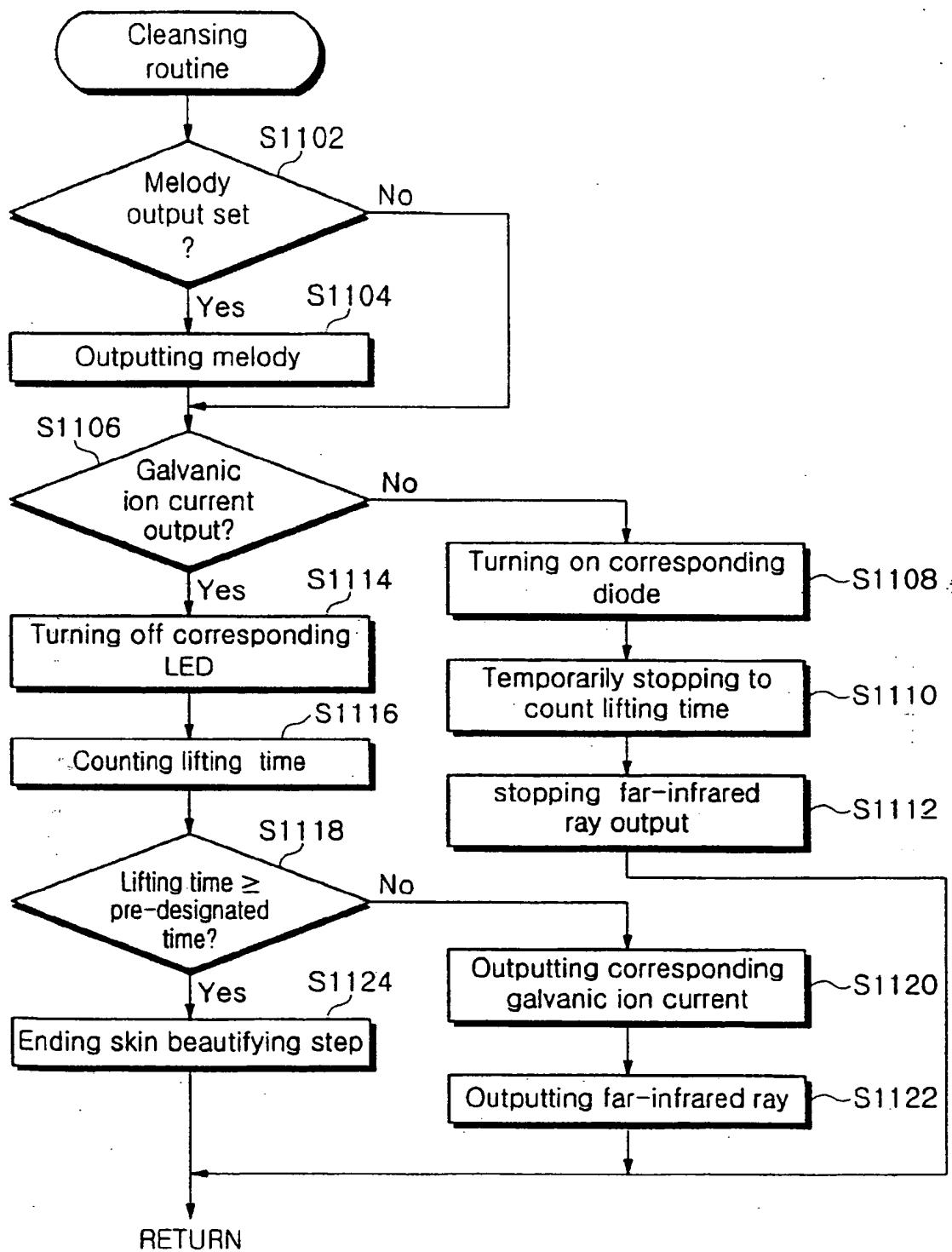


FIG. 11

FIG. 12A

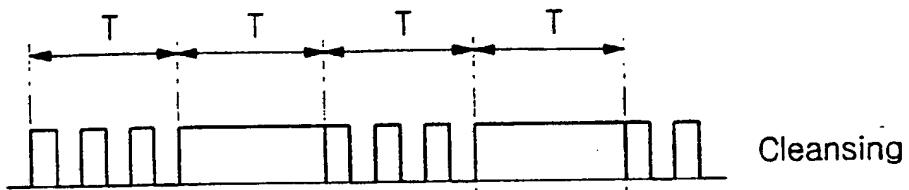


FIG. 12B

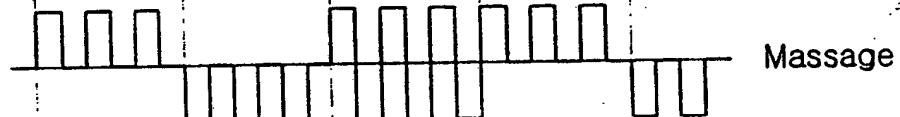


FIG. 12C

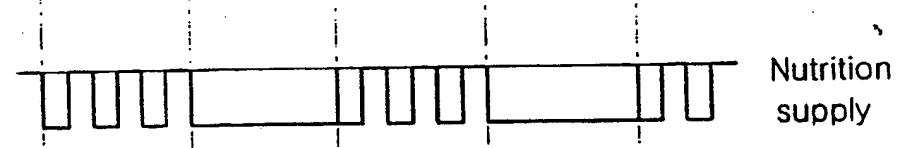
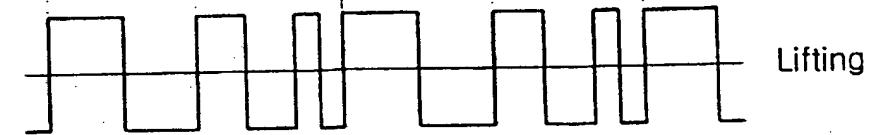


FIG. 12D





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 99 30 9853

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Description of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.)
X	US 5 251 637 A (SHALVI RAM) 12 October 1993 (1993-10-12) * column 4, line 16 - line 54; figure 1 * * column 6, line 59 - column 7, line 28 *	1, 2, 15	A61N1/32
A	WO 98 25667 A (ELECTROGESIC CORP ; PARRIS DANNY M (US)) 18 June 1998 (1998-06-18) * abstract *	16	
A	FR 2 563 437 A (JULLIARD ELIZABETH) 31 October 1985 (1985-10-31) * page 1, line 13 - page 2, line 1 *	16	
A	US 5 514 167 A (SMITH MARGARET M ET AL) 7 May 1996 (1996-05-07) * column 1, line 7 - line 58 * * column 4, line 23 - line 31 *	1	
A	WO 97 36645 A (688726 ALBERTA LTD) 9 October 1997 (1997-10-09) * page 4 - page 5 *	1	
A	US 5 797 966 A (DEBOURG JEAN-PIERRE ET AL) 25 August 1998 (1998-08-25) * column 4, line 1 - line 45; figure 1 *	1	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.) A61N A61H
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 10 March 2000	Examiner Petter, E
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document			
T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 99 30 9853

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on. The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

10-03-2000

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
US 5251637	A	12-10-1993	AT 168023 T DE 68928731 D DE 68928731 T EP 0441895 A WO 9004997 A JP 4505561 T		15-07-1998 13-08-1998 04-02-1999 21-08-1991 17-05-1990 01-10-1992
WO 9825667	A	18-06-1998	AU 6236998 A EP 0981390 A		03-07-1998 01-03-2000
FR 2563437	A	31-10-1985	NONE		
US 5514167	A	07-05-1996	US RE36260 E		27-07-1999
WO 9736645	A	09-10-1997	AU 3043997 A CA 2221414 A EP 0836514 A		22-10-1997 09-10-1997 22-04-1998
US 5797966	A	25-08-1998	FR 2746320 A EP 0796635 A		26-09-1997 24-09-1997

EPO FORM P459
For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82